

John. W.

S E R M O N

ON THE

D E A T H

Of the Right Honourable

A L E X A N D E R,

EARL of EGLINTOUNE.

To

his sacred Majesty

The King

the following Sermon is
with the greatest humility

presented by

His Majesty's

most loyal, obedient

and devoted Subject

The Author

A
S E R M O N
PREACHED ON OCCASION
OF THE
D E A T H
Of the Late
A L E X A N D E R,
EARL of EGLINTOUNE.

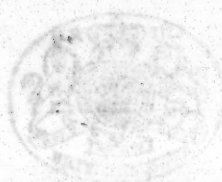
BY
ALEXANDER CUNYNGHAM,
Minister at Symington.

Pfal. xxiii. 4. YEA, THOUGH I WALK THROUGH THE
VALLEY OF THE SHADOW OF DEATH, I WILL FEAR
NO EVIL.

G L A S G O W;
Printed by ROBERT DUNCAN.

M,DCC,LXIX.

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TO THE
RIGHT HONOURABLE,
THE
COUNTESS of EGLINTOUNE.

M A D A M,

TO you who gave birth
to the accomplished
Nobleman, whose much la-
mented fate, is the occasion
of the following discourse, it
is with the utmost tenderneſs
addreſſed. For you my bo-
ſom bleeds, and no powers of
language are capable to ex-

press my feelings. To offer you consolation would be vain, for who is the mother that would not deeply mourn for such a Son as “Your
“ much loved Lord Eglin-
“ toun!” What then must a heart so refined as Yours,---a heart which always felt for distress, suffer from the late sad, cruel, and unexpected disaster in Your family!

A person so elegantly adorned with every amiable

quality, of the finest taste and manners, whose very appearance at once commanded the love, respect, and admiration of all that beheld him, must when dead be universally regretted; but the mournful circumstances of his death are too deep for tragedy itself!

I tremble whilst I write,
and the tear swells into my
eye.

Often did I see him gay
and happy, the darling and
delight of all that knew
him!----

Such he always was, and
as such his image will re-
main engraved on every
heart. His going forth in
the morning in full posses-
sion of all the blessings hea-
ven bestows, and returning
again a dying man, the vic-
tim of unprovoked, yet un-

DEDICATION. v

relenting rage, is a thought
my soul cannot endure!

Forgive me, Madam, for
thus addressing You, in a
language which will not a-
bate your sorrows; when
the heart is deeply affect-
ed, we speak as we feel,
and poor is the consolation
which those who mourn
can offer to the mournful.
So deeply am I impressed
with a regard to the me-
mory, and affected for the

death of my much honoured Patron and Friend, that I can scarcely say to the long admired mother of so valuable a Son, “ BE COM-
“ FORTED.”

How happy was you in being the parent of so much merit, and with what joys did he sweeten your venerable old age! To speak in your own emphatic language, “ He alas! is now no

more; “ You are his living tomb;” but You will meet again in regions where there are no interruptions to the happiness of virtue.

That You, and Your numerous offspring and friends, the weeping relations of your dear deceased son, may receive comfort from the God of peace, under the present heavy

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distress, is the wish and
prayer of,

Madam,

Your LADYSHIP'S *obliged,*

obedient and afflicted

humble servant,

ALEXANDER CUNYNGHAM.

nd

A
S E R M O N
P R E A C H E D O N O C C A S I O N
O F T H E
D E A T H

Of the Right Honourable
A L E X A N D E R,
E A R L o f E G L I N T O U N E.

it,

Pfal. xxiii. 4. YEA, THOUGH I WALK THROUGH THE
VALLEY OF THE SHADOW OF DEATH, I WILL FEAR
NO EVIL.

M.

TRUE greatness discovers itself
in the most trying and affecting
situations. There is no forti-
tude in a pretended contempt of dan-
ger, when no real dangers are to be fear-

ed, nor is there any room for the exercise of resignation, when no real evils befall us. But when death presents its awful form, and gives us the fatal mandate that calls us from the world, then is the good man and hero displayed, by a calm dignity of mind, and a pious submission to the will of heaven. The elegant author of this devout hymn, having in the most beautiful language acknowledged the bounty and mercies of the Lord, expresses his confidence in the Divine favour and protection in this sublime sentiment; “ Yea, though I walk through the dark
 “ shadowy valley of death, I will fear
 “ no evil, for thou art my God and my
 “ guide, my trust and confidence is in
 “ thee, and thy consolations shall de-
 “ light my soul.”

In further discoursing on this occasion; I shall,

First, Briefly mention a few of those circumstances which render death so awful to human nature.

Secondly, Consider what is our proper consolation against the fear of death. And,

Lastly, Endeavour to delineate some particulars of the character, and dying behaviour, of that late amiable Nobleman, whose untimely end is the occasion of my chusing this subject of discourse.

To return to the first of these. Death is the awful separation of the soul and

body. The soul long united to the body, by the most intimate connection in nature, shudders at the thought of separation, and shrinks back with horror at the approaches of death. Fain would she stay her flight, and at length reluctantly leaves the quivering lips, and trembling limbs of her earthly tabernacle. It is thus when two dear and affectionate friends, are by the hardships of fortune, condemned to bid a lasting or perpetual farewell to each other, and to go to different countries, where wide extended regions, and vast oceans are interposed betwixt them, having embraced, and oft embraced again, they, at last, with the deepest impressions of sorrow, part from the arms of mutual friendship.

But this reflection naturally leads us to consider, that death dissolves all our connections with the present world. It is not a separation from one, but from all our much-loved friends, relations and acquaintance. The dying husband beholds the eyes of an affectionate wife flowing with streams of sorrow, whilst his own are soon about to be closed by the unrelenting hand of death. Struck dumb with grief, whilst the tongue is unable to speak, the melting heart heaves out the affecting groan over the corpse of the departed brother! Aged parents behold the comforts of their grey hairs laid in the dust, or children with tears of filial gratitude convey their parents to the grave. Such are the conquests of death! so arbitrary its domain! and thus doth it break

asunder the strongest ties of nature and affection.

It is then also that we must bid farewell to all earthly enjoyments. The sun withholds his beams, and the fruitful valleys no longer bring forth their stores for our support. When the dark curtain of death is drawn over our eyes, we are lost to this present life, and have passed *that* BOURNE *from whence no traveller returns*. Then must we leave the world and all its delights. Then does the sceptre drop from the hand of the monarch, and the great and mighty must surrender their pomp and power. Low lies the learned head, mute is the tuneful voice; the eloquent tongue is heard no more,

and the wise man's saying is confirmed, *That all is vanity.*

But further, Death is an awful change of our state and condition. We must pass from the world in which we dwell, into a world unknown, from objects with which we have been familiarly conversant, into new and untried scenes of being: We must lay down our earthly bodies, and all our former powers and methods of acting must be altered. We must leave the society of men framed and fashioned like unto ourselves, and mingle with beings different in their powers and capacities, and in the mode and manner of their existence. Thus awful it is, to stand on the borders of the grave. Behind us a world long since known,

before us an unknown, an untried eternity! Thus formidable is death, even when it presents itself in its mildest form, but when surpris'd by barbarous hands, and from the full enjoyment of health, strength and pleasure, hurried into eternity, how dreadful is the interval between the time the mortal wound is given, and the moment that forever closes our eyes! To be calm and resigned, patient and forgiving, in circumstances so distressing, so affecting, discovers the truest greatness and magnanimity. But from this dark and melancholy view of things let us for a little turn our eyes, and consider,

Secondly, What are our proper consolations against the fear of death.

The sublime religion which we profess, fortifies the human mind with the strongest consolations against the fears of death. Animated with the prospect of immortal joys, the virtuous man smiles at this king of terrors, and beholds him as a messenger of peace. He stands assured, that though our bodies go down into the grave, yet the soul of man, his nobler and more exalted part, shall survive forever, in still increasing beauty and perfection, unhurt amidst the ruins of time, *the wrecks of matter, and the crush of worlds*. In that exalted state, the powers and faculties of our minds shall be enlarged, and fitted to receive the most glorious and extensive objects of knowledge. There we shall dwell in the presence of God; and if the contemplation of

inferior excellences whilst here below, is a source of the most rational pleasure; what exquisite delights must arise from the contemplation of the great original, uncreated fountain of joy and happiness! By departing from this world, we leave the society of men, which is disturbed by loud and frequent contentions; in a future world we join the exalted communion of angels, and the spirits of the just made perfect, and become inhabitants of those blessed abodes, where guilt never enters, and the voice of discord never is heard. The same excellent religion hath informed us, that our bodies shall hereafter arise from the silent mansions of the tomb; That they shall be re-united to our souls in a refined, spiritualized, and heavenly state; that

they shall be no longer liable to pains, diseases, or dissolution; that then the happiness of the just shall be perfected; that when this corruptible, shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal frame shall be cloathed with immortality, death shall be forever swallowed up in victory. Where then O death! is thy sting? or grave, where are thy triumphs? The dead shall break loose from thy chains, the tomb surrender its prisoners, and thy proud unrelenting dominion shall eternally cease.

These are some of the considerations that animate the good man in the prospect of death; and when our friends depart the world, let us remember that they are only gone a few years (per-

haps hours) before us, to the enjoyment of never-ending felicity. We have indeed seen them descend into the dust, but from the dust they shall arise again; and their souls are gone to that God who gave them life and being. In the realms of bliss we shall meet again, to part no more. Our friendship shall be renewed in that glorious state, where our natures improved far beyond our present conceptions, shall be possessed of all the happiness they are capable of enjoying. There we shall eternally dwell together, in uninterrupted peace and harmony, in the presence of God where is fulness of joy, and at his right hand where are pleasures evermore.

But now I proceed to the last thing

proposed, which is to delineate the character, and dying behaviour, of that late amiable Nobleman, whose untimely end is the occasion of the present discourse.

Be not afraid, my friends, that I am about to flatter the living, by bestowing unmerited praises on the dead. Flattery my soul abhors, and truth alone becomes this sacred place.

Yet let me intreat every feeling heart within these walls, to join with me, in deploring the unhappy fate of a great man, possessed of many useful and ornamental qualities, yet cut off by the cruel hand of violence, in the very prime of his life.

I need now scarce mention, that the person I have in view, is the late *Alexander, Earl of Eglington*, my patron, and may I honour myself so far as to say, he was my friend. Shall I speak of his abilities as a member of the most august assembly of this nation, in which his great talents were eminently displayed, on several important occasions, when the interests of his country were really concerned. Indeed, it is scarce necessary to say, that he was born an orator. Those who had the honour of his Lordship's conversation, might discern from that flow of easy and graceful language, that accuracy of expression, and that depth of judgment, which distinguished his every word and sentiment, that he was form-

ed with all the talents to persuade, instruct, and delight.

His humane, polite, and engaging behaviour, his affability and condescension to his inferiors, is known to all. No man had more the art of rendering every person around him happy, or was more agreeably adorned with all the fine talents of the *Nobleman* and *Gentleman*.

It would be unpardonable in a discourse of this nature, to omit one part of his character. He was charitable to the poor; the benevolence that smiled in his countenance, discovered itself in his tenderness to the distressed; his eyes were open to the tears, his ears to the voice of sorrow, and he sel-

dom allowed an object of compassion to go away from him unrelieved, or unsatisfied.

Such were his virtues! what was his end? He went forth from his house gay as the morning, whilst health and strength sat blooming on his cheeks; but mark his fatal return! all pale and ghastly, and wounded beyond the most distant hopes of recovery!

The inhuman circumstances of his death, let the law determine. Sufficient it is to say, that he bore his fate with the greatest magnanimity. *You have done to me what I would have done to none of all mankind*, was his language to the wicked author of his melancholy end; and when his servants, fir-

ed with just indignation, were about to proceed to violence towards him, *Take*, said his Lordship, *the unhappy man, but not abuse him*. Those servants to whom he was the best of masters, and who had long and faithfully served him, now first with reluctance obeyed his commands.

The coolness with which he afterwards regulated his affairs, in the short time he had to live, the fortitude and resignation which he expressed under the acutest pains, and his composed, though most affectionate, farewell to his relations and friends, was never surpassed by any hero of ancient Greece or Rome. Shall I mention the griefs of an aged and fond mother, bleeding to behold her beloved son in such a si-

tuation?--- Shall I paint the distresses of a brother, whose manly heart, which had often braved the dangers of war, was now heaving with sorrow?--- Shall I represent to your imaginations, the shock which the fatal news conveyed to his sisters, and numerous relations and acquaintance?--- No! I will not rekindle their griefs by such descriptions. Yet it must be said, that as there never was a deeper occasion for sorrow, so sorrow was never more deeply or sincerely felt.

Thus did virtue, thus did greatness fall! how striking this instance of the uncertainty of life! how many bosoms now mourn for him whom they formerly admired and loved, and who now looks down with tender pity on

their griefs, from the superior regions in which he is placed!

Let us all unite in deploring the guilt that hath been committed. The blood of innocence defileth a land, and with the blood of an innocent man hath our land been defiled. Let us guard against the violence and impetuosity of our passions, and by an uniformly humane and virtuous conduct, express our detestation of all such base and enormous crimes. Which may God enable us to do, and to his name be praise. *Amen.*

F I N I S,

